

## In the Crosshairs of Cybercriminals – Houston’s Infrastructure Industries Are Under Attack

Article

April 24, 2025 | *The Houston Lawyer* | 2 minute read

On December 25, 2009, I moved from Kentucky to Washington, DC to join the Department of Justice’s Counterterrorism Section and its Al Qaeda Unit, joining an international effort to bring Al Qaeda’s terrorists to justice. At the time, US intelligence agencies considered Al Qaeda the country’s primary national security threat. In fact, on that Christmas morning more than 15 years ago, while I drove into Washington for the first time, a Nigerian national, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, arrived in Detroit attempting to ignite a bomb hidden in his underwear on behalf of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula – an Al Qaeda affiliate based in Yemen. Although passengers subdued Abdulmutallab before he could cause any harm, he brought home the notion that Al Qaeda was still a threat to the homeland more than eight years after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Much has changed since then. According to the US intelligence community, the People’s Republic of China has eclipsed Al Qaeda as the largest national security threat, and instead of attacking us with bombs, planes or martyrs, China, Russia, North Korea and criminal organizations – often working with nation-states – deploy weapons that don’t target physical structures, but rather the nation’s cyber network. And they are primarily targeting America’s businesses with a focus on America’s critical infrastructure.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), a US federal agency responsible for safeguarding national cybersecurity and protecting critical infrastructure against threats, “[t]here are 16 critical infrastructure sectors . . . so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.” Cybersecurity in these industries is crucial since any disruption or breach can lead to significant impacts on public safety, the economy and national security. Four critical infrastructure sectors call Houston home – energy, health care,

### Related People

**Alamdar S. Hamdani**

Partner

**HOUSTON**

+1.713.221.1303

[alamdar.hamdani@bracewell.com](mailto:alamdar.hamdani@bracewell.com)

**Lucy Porter**

Counsel

**HOUSTON**

+1.713.221.3328

[lucy.porter@bracewell.com](mailto:lucy.porter@bracewell.com)

### Related Industries

[Technology](#)

[Infrastructure](#)

[Energy](#)

### Related Practices

[Government Enforcement & Investigations](#)

[Data Security & Privacy](#)

transportation (including the Port of Houston and two major airports) and a large concentration of chemical manufacturing companies. It is why Houston's businesses and public utilities are on the front lines of America's war against cyberattacks from government actors and criminal organizations.

Read more of the article that was originally published in *The Houston Lawyer* in the March/April 2025 edition (Vol. 62, No. 5).